

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A method for operating a server group to improve bandwidth efficiency in a computer network, wherein the server group is operable to transmit files between the server group and destinations on the computer network through a communication link having a finite bandwidth, the method comprising:

monitoring bandwidth usage of a communication link for connecting a server group to a wide area network, using software operably associated with the communication link;

distributing a rule set to individual servers of the server farm, wherein the rule set defines rules for limiting serving of data from the individual servers depending on file type and a current state of the bandwidth usage;

characterizing files stored in operable association with the individual servers according to type, using software operating on the individual servers;

informing the individual servers of the current state of the bandwidth usage as monitored by the software operably associated with the communication link; and

serving the files from the individual servers to the wide area network via the communication link in compliance with the rule set, so as to limit serving of specified file types from the servers during periods when the bandwidth usage exceeds a threshold amount relative to a finite bandwidth of the communication link.

22. (New) The method of Claim 21, wherein the characterizing step further comprises assigning a type to each of the files based on a corresponding file name for each file.

23. (New) The method of Claim 22, wherein the characterizing step further comprises characterizing a type of each of the files based on a corresponding file name extension for each file.

24. (New) The method of Claim 21, wherein the characterizing step further comprises crawling through a memory operably associated with the server to identify associated groups of files, wherein each of the groups of files is configured to be aggregated into a larger file.

25. (New) The method of Claim 21, wherein the characterizing step further comprises crawling through files stored in a storage device operably associated with the server to identify files that do not contain hyperlinks and are not identified by hyperlinks in other files stored by the storage device.

26. (New) The method of Claim 21, wherein the serving step further comprises selecting a rule from the rule set according to the current state of the bandwidth usage.

27. (New) The method of Claim 21, further comprising distributing a replacement rule set to individual servers of the server group when the current state of the bandwidth usage changes by more than a specified amount, wherein the replacement rule set replaces the rule set and defines rules for limiting serving of data from the individual servers depending on file type and a current state of the bandwidth usage.

28. (New) The method of Claim 21, further comprising repeating the informing step at periodic intervals.

29. (New) A system for operating a plurality of servers to improve bandwidth efficiency in a computer network, the system comprising:

a plurality of servers operable to connect to a computer network through a communication link having a finite bandwidth; and

first program instructions operably associated with the communication link to perform the steps of (a) monitoring bandwidth usage of the communication link, (b) distributing a rule set to each of the plurality of servers, wherein the rule set defines rules for limiting serving of data from each of the plurality of servers depending on file type and a current state of the bandwidth usage, and (c) informing each of the plurality of servers of a current state of the bandwidth usage; and

second program instructions operably associated with each of the plurality of servers to perform the steps of (d) characterizing files stored in operable association with each of the plurality of servers according to type, and (e) serving the files from each of the plurality of servers to the wide area network via the communication link in compliance with the rule set, so as to limit serving of specified file types from the servers during periods when the bandwidth usage exceeds a threshold amount relative to a finite bandwidth of the communication link.

30. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the second program instructions are further operable to perform the characterizing step by characterizing a type of each of the files based on a corresponding file name extension for each file.

31. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein the second program instructions are further operable to perform the characterizing step by characterizing a type of each of the files according to a corresponding file name extension for each file.

32. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the second program instructions are further operable to perform the characterizing step by crawling through a storage device operably associated with the server to identify associated groups of files, wherein each of the groups of files is configured to be aggregated into a larger file.

33. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the second program instructions are further operable to perform the characterizing step by crawling through files stored in a storage device operably associated with the server to identify files that do not contain hyperlinks and are not identified by hyperlinks in other files of the storage device.

34. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the second program instructions are further operable to perform the serving step by selecting a rule from the rule set according to the current state of the bandwidth usage.

35. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the first program instructions are further operable to distribute a replacement rule set to each of the plurality of servers when the current state of the bandwidth usage changes by more than a specified amount, wherein the replacement rule set replaces the rule set and defines rules for limiting serving of data from each of the plurality of servers depending on file type and a current state of the bandwidth usage.

36. (New) The system of Claim 29, wherein the first program instructions further operable to repeat the informing step at periodic intervals.